THE New Republic

A "Neutralized" Middle East?

An Editorial

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The Case for Harold Stassen

By CHALMERS ROBERTS

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MARCH 10, 1958

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Washington Wire

"Drop Benson—Or Else"

LINCOLN did not free the slaves at once; he sacrificed personal desire for the larger objective of winning the war. He was bitterly attacked by abolitionists. Franklin Roosevelt often seemed tricky and cruel; rightly or wrongly he sacrificed lesser objectives (and men) to larger objectives. Truman could never sacrifice friends (even unworthy ones); his relatively poor record of domestic legislation was a partial result.

Now Eisenhower faces the same cruel dilemma. He believes in Ezra Benson and Benson's policies. But he is losing GOP farm support—support that may be crucial in getting through vastly more important national legislation: foreign aid and trade for example.

It is a dreadful choice that we offer most Presidents. Must they buy victory for the paramount good at the cost of what they regard as ignoble acts? If we had cabinet responsibility and a sophisticated party structure, it would be easier. But we impose on the President an awful loneliness of power. The choice for Eisenhower today may not necessarily be "Drop Benson—or else!" But the possibility is there, the situation is symbolic; the GOP Midwest farm bloc is in active revolt and the revolt could spread to foreign affairs.

Democrats are chuckling. Farm hatred for Benson, many feel, will drop the 1958 elections into their laps without lifting a finger. Few offer constructive alternatives. This could be short-sighted. Benson may be wrong, but he is a man of conviction and courage. Farmers are now down to 12 percent of the population. Many a city dweller who is taxed twice for his food feels the size of farm subsidies and farm surpluses is out of proportion to the good achieved. Why not let Benson try to lower high price supports, he asks gratefully?

The *New York Times* says Dr. Bernard Schwartz "deserves a vote of thanks" for unearthing the evidence that caught FCC Commissioner Mack. We agree, and grow increasingly perplexed by the way our contemporary *Time* handled the story. The first reference (Feb. 17) smartalecked Schwartz, *Time*-style, calling him "unlovable" and hinting that he had padded his expense accounts—a charge later dropped even by its perpetrator, Chairman Oren Harris (D, Ark.). No reference to Sherman Adams' pressure on the Civil Aeronautics Board.

On Feb. 24—Schwartz still the target, with the oh-so-funny travels about Washington of his evidence against Mack, regarding whom (*Time* grudged) Schwartz had "made out something of a plausible case." No reference to Adams.

March 3—No reference to Adams. None to Schwartz. Complete *Time* black-out.

Meanwhile Eisenhower at his press conference angrily said he had never heard of the Adams intervention in CAB. We wonder. Does Ike read *Time*?

Jenner at Work

WE dropped into the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee hearings for a minute last week—and stayed two hours. Witnesses testified for the Jenner bill to limit the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Seems the court has been too lenient on radicals lately and must be curbed. From our notes: "Only Senators Watkins and Jenner present and Watkins soon left. Jenner picked teeth two hours using same toothpick. This the subcommittee that got $209,000 to investigate Reds, whose Democratic counsel, pudgy Sourwine, unsuccessfully tried for party's Senatorial nomination in Nevada in 1956, and whose Republican counsel, 'Judge' Newbold Morris (New York City Municipal Court), now seeks GOP Senatorial nomination in New Jersey.

"Witness Malin, Cumberland (Md.) chiropractor, complained of recent speech made by Soviet embassy officials to innocent Cumberland students—this the kind of thing developed by Supreme Court laxity.

"Witness Madalen Leetch, from American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, warned of 'socialist-communist one-world government'. Mrs. Stafford, six years member of Los Angeles school board, made skin creep with report of 'Communist conspiracy infiltrations,' subsequent to Court's throwing out loyalty oaths.

"Local attorney, McCann, 70, fascinates us telling how he unsuccessfully carried damage case to Supreme Court against sellers of slenderizing apparatus known as 'lithe-line'—an elastic rope. Seems rope snapped back and hit client's eye. He holds up the rope. This shows Court usurping power. Jenner thanks him. Applause from rear as McCann says he also opposes Communism.

"Witness McNamara, looking like neat FBI agent and representing 1,300,000 Veterans of Foreign Wars (all red-blooded), says Court has been making 'statements that are untrue', and decisions 'not conforming to will of the people' as shown by Gallup Poll and other judicial authorities. He quotes Court's *Jencks* decision and reverses it.

"Slunk away after two hours, skin creeping, and wondering about lithe-line. Jenner still at work on teeth."

A tall old gentleman in a top hat stopped by our office last week with a "lost" notice. We sympathize with all losers and agreed to insert the following, odd though it be (it may be a code)—"LOST: A Sense of Urgency. Strayed or stolen sometime in past two months at corner of Recession Avenue and Satellite Square. Foul play possible. Left behind a declining National Product and orphaned Educational System: in sad contrast to Bolshoi children next door. No monetary reward but eternal historical gratitude. If found: return to American Nation."

We don't understand a word of it.

Notes

THE FOUR GOP Senators on the McClellan labor rackets committee who insisted on investigating Walter Reuther and the Kohler strike seem unhappy at the way things are turning out; no corruption, collusion or dictatorship yet indicated. . . . The Gallup Poll shows 73 percent of Americans favor Alaska statehood, 65 percent Hawaiian statehood; this column is in a lonely minority, still thinking Commonwealth status (like Puerto Rico) would be preferable for non-contiguous areas. . . . There's increasing anxiety here over French political stability.

T.R.B.

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Correspondence

► *Getlein and the Moderns*

SIRS:

IF YOU replaced Gerald Johnson with David Lawrence and signed up Walter Kerr as your drama critic *The New Republic* would be a more appropriate magazine for the art criticism of Frank Getlein.

His latest contribution starts with nos-

(Continued on page 23)

A "Neutral" Mideast?

IF THERE is to be a Summit meeting this summer, as the recent "very useful conversations" between President Eisenhower and Soviet Ambassador Menshikov suggest, the Middle East will almost surely be on the agenda. Indeed, a growing number of voices in the West argue that the best chance for reaching some agreement now lies in that area, rather than in Europe. Most of these spokesmen favor one of two alternative approaches. According to one school of thinking the attempt should be made to strike a deal with Russia for division of the Middle East into Western and Eastern spheres of influence. Advocates of this policy point to the British-Russian agreement of 1907 when Persia was so divided. It is a simple and straightforward idea, and, in our judgment is utterly unrealistic, based on a mistaken conception of Soviet motives and interests. The Soviet Union, unlike Czarist Russia, has no clearly defined geographic or economic interest in the area: it can well exist without Persian or Arabian oil, and possession of the Straits has become a very secondary issue in the atomic age.

Soviet interests in the Middle East are now exclusively political. The minimum aim Moscow pursues in the Middle East is the establishment and maintenance of neutralist governments, friendly disposed to the Soviet Union and willing to collaborate with it. At a later stage Russia expects that these countries will move (or be moved) from a policy of "positive neutralism" to closer identification with Soviet policy; this will come about gradually, it is thought, as the result of the growing influence of Communist, or pro-Communist, elements in these countries, and the taking over of the Arab national movement from within. If this inner momentum given by the local Communist forces should not suffice, the Russians would rely on outside pressure, the impact of an international balance of power tilted in their favor, to do the rest.

For these reasons, agreement to a division of the Middle East into spheres of influence, however inoffensively worded, would be quite unthinkable to the Soviets. It would give Moscow nothing it does not already have, and it would do considerable harm to Soviet prestige throughout the Middle East and all Asia.

But there is another proposal, to which Soviet agreement is more likely: neutralization of the Middle East and agreement upon the cessation of arms shipments to the area as a preliminary step toward the "exemption" of the Middle East from the Cold War. From the Soviet point of view such an interim solution might be highly desirable, since it coincides with Moscow's minimum program for the Middle East. Western military alliances, the Bagdad Pact and perhaps even the remaining Western military bases would disappear. The camp of "positive neutralism" would gain in strength, for left on their own resources, it is unlikely that countries such as the Hashemite Kingdoms, the Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia would be able to hold out for very long against the appeal of the new Egyptian-Syrian

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republic. Moscow would have to discontinue its arms supplies to Egypt, Syria and the Yemen, but this in practice would not amount to very much, because these countries have been saturated with arms up to, and above, their absorptive capacity for years to come.

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What would the West gain from such an agreement? It would probably insure localization of a war in the Middle East that may, or may not, break out in the near future. This would be a problematic gain, for paradoxically enough the fear that a local war would cause a general conflagration has of late been the main deterrent; once this deterrent is removed a local war may become more, rather than less, likely, and there will be no guarantee in the last resort that such a war will indeed remain localized. Agreement on neutralization of the Middle East would also involve dissolution of the Bagdad Pact —which need not be lamented since its existence was largely fictitious anyway, and it would not have done much good in an emergency. (It is difficult to envisage how Turkey, however, could possibly be compelled to leave NATO and to stop buying arms from the West.)

Neutralization of the whole Middle East might seem to be tantamount to the loss of the Middle East as far as the West is concerned. The military bases in Dhahran and Lybia would be lost, it can be argued, and Turkey and Persia would be at the mercy of the Soviet Union. A giant Anschluss movement throughout the Arab world would merely be a question of time, and with this there would be no more access to the oil of the Arab Peninsula.

Against this, it can be argued with considerable justification that the West cannot possibly "lose" the Middle East, because it has not had a commanding position there for some time. Public opinion throughout the Arab world has been neutralist and anti-Western for many years: the attempts to "organize" the area, to induce it to join defensive alliances were a mistake because they did not take into account this popular feeling. The loss of these allies might be a psychological shock to some people in the West, but it would not affect Western military strength in the Middle East one way or another. The possible loss of Arab oil poses a much more difficult problem, for which there is but one solution, the lessening of Western, and especially Western European, dependence from this source of oil by all available means. If the present dependence should continue or even increase, the West may face economic and political disaster in the Middle East if Nasser should take over the Saudian and the Iraqi oilfields. If on the other hand Western dependence should lessen, if Cairo's stranglehold would not be complete, there is at least a good chance that the new masters of the oilfields will prove reasonable and be ready to do business on an ordinary commercial basis. The days of the monarchies in the Middle East are counted; Western support may delay somewhat the process of final disintegration in these countries though hardly for very long. The Soviet leaders realized in 1955 what should have been understood in the West before, namely that the Middle East is a world in revolution, a revolution created not by Soviet propaganda, but by the breakdown of the political and social system in the area.

In the chaos of recent years the West was mainly concerned with the resulting military vacuum whereas the Soviet leaders were preoccupied with the political and ideological vacuum. Which had a great many advantages from the Soviet point of view: The West, ignoring the political crisis, got itself more and more entangled in inner-Arab rivalries, antagonized most of the Arab world by trying to make part of it join its defensive alliances. The revolutionary situation on the other hand made Soviet physical presence (in strength) quite unnecessary —it required only guidance. And this guidance could be provided largely by local Communist forces.

At the present stage, Communist parties are not yet expected to play the leading political role in the Middle East. For there seems to be an excellent chance for the Soviets to win over the Arab nationalist movement from *within*. The Soviet leaders have not been greatly perturbed by the strong nationalist wave in the Arab world which has caused so many misunderstandings and given rise to so many false hopes in the Western world as to its potentialities as a "counterweight" against Communism. To define a man or a movement as nationalist in the present day world does not mean a thing; everybody is a nationalist, and Khrushchev and Mao Tse-tung are second to none. The decisive criterion is the socio-political content of a nationalist movement, its political ideas. What are they?

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The political ideas of Nasserism, at least as voiced in its propaganda, can be summarized in two short formulas. One: We are neutralist but we fervently hope that the Soviet bloc will defeat the Imperialist West. Two: We are not Communists; we only want to establish a popular democratic society on the pattern of Mao's China. This fascination with Communist China goes several years back, but it has only recently attracted the attention of Western observers. Edouard Sablier on his return from Cairo commented the other day in *Le Monde* (Feb. 7) on the attempts made in Egypt to apply "Chinese solutions" whenever possible.

These views, however self-contradictory and preposterous, have gained the widest currency: they reflect the general ideological confusion in the Middle East, which opens up tremendous possibilities for the Russians. In their view Nasserism is becoming (to paraphrase a famous formula used by Stalin in the 20's) "Arab Nationalist in its outward form and proto-Communist in its content." Certainly there is no room now, nor will there

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be for some time to come, for the niceties of dialectical materialism and some of the other more esoteric tenets of Leninist doctrine. It is no major tragedy for the Russians if some of the basic tenets of Leninism are ignored as long as such articles of faith as the Leninist theory of Imperialism are wholeheartedly accepted.

There are, in short, stringent limitations to the scope of Western action in the Arab world. Any Western interference, however well-intentioned, is likely to be self-defeating. Toward Syria and Egypt perhaps the best policy would be one of studied inactivity. Minor acts or gestures of hostility are ineffective, for they only irritate the people they are meant to impress and preclude potential improvement in their policy toward the West in the more distant future. Friendliness, however sincere, is unlikely to ripen any large political harvest for the West because it is a psychological necessity for the political organizers of these countries to proclaim a state of danger, to point to an enemy power—and Israel by itself is too small to fulfill this role. What these countries want as much as economic development is a gain in self-esteem; and how can they better prove to themselves their independence and their newly won power than by displaying ability to defy the West?

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Passions may calm down in course of time; the radical movements in the Arab lands may grow in positive content as development plans go forward with Western help, until hatred and resentment, their present *raison d'etre,* will be gradually abandoned as unnecessary. At present, it can be argued that a policy of studied political non-interference and demonstrative disinterest would be most likely to expedite the process. The risks that this involves are admittedly formidable. Some of the countries involved might gradually and almost imperceptibly be drawn into the Soviet sphere of power. This possibility, which in one or two cases is a probability, would have to be accepted as outside our preventive powers.

In terms of a Summit conference this would mean that the neutralization of the Arab countries and Israel should be taken into active consideration. (The neutralization of the entire Middle East, including Turkey and Persia, would be impractical and not in the Western interest.) Those who want to be neutral should be neutralized. This would involve the release of Iraq from the Bagdad Pact (an event that would be mourned by nobody in Bagdad); the Eisenhower Doctrine, inasmuch as it concerns the Arab world and Israel, should be discreetly permitted to fade away—to remove another bone of contention.

Such an experiment in the neutralization of the Arab East certainly won't give spectacular results in the near future. But it may be an experiment worth trying, for the West has nothing to lose in the area but embarrassing ties and a few useless alliances.

Honesty on Foreign Aid

FOR A brief moment during Eric Johnston's foreign aid spectacular in Washington last week it was as if the klieg lights died and the bunting drooped. Deputy Under-Secretary of State Douglas Dillon was responding to a question from the floor. The questioner wanted to know whether $767 million—the sum allocated for economic and technical assistance in the Administration's $3.9 billion aid bill—would be "adequate to the job."

He seemed to be inviting Mr. Dillon to state simply that $767 million was no more than a modest beginning. Instead Mr. Dillon replied that "if we get the appropriations requested, we will be in perfectly adequate shape and ready to do the job that's before us."

Now we recognize the importance of Mr. Johnston's bi-partisan display of support for aid and we most certainly hope that it influences Congressional votes. We are dismayed, however, by the dishonest manner in which the aid program is presented year after year. Mr. Dillon, who distinguished himself at the conference by his knowledgeable exposition of the aid program, must know very well that $767 million is a modest contribution indeed to the enormous capital requirements of newly-developing economies in Asia and Africa. He knows, we are equally confident, that it is a modest response to Soviet economic penetration. Yet because the Administration has assessed, no doubt realistically, what can be expected of Congress in 1958, we are all asked to shrink our minds to Senator Jenner's proportions.

Charts circulated to all conference delegates showed $2.1 billion of the aid budget allocated to economic aid. This is deliberately misleading. All that can in honesty be described as a direct contribution to economic growth in the less-developed areas is $767 million—$625 million for the Development Loan Fund and $142 million for technical assistance. To be sure, some of the remainder incidentally serves economic purposes. For example, $865 million for "defense support" to our military allies pays soldier wages and in other ways props up economies which must support swollen armed forces. Similarly, the President's $200 million "contingency" fund for a Jordan or a Guatemala-type crisis involves some spending for economic ends. But these are most often the ends of military crash programs rather than those of orderly economic growth.

Dishonest presentation of the case for aid year after year could very well lead to a dangerous negative reaction. It will be increasingly apparent that economic aid on the scale which Mr. Dillon describes as "perfectly adequate" can make little or no difference in the desperate economic and political condition of most Asian and African countries. Contrary to much popular discussion,

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these countries are *not* catching up with the West. Instead the economic gap between East and West gets wider and wider. Fifteen of the richest industrial countries had an average per capita income in 1938 roughly 10 times that of 20 non-industrial countries. By 1954, according to population expert Kingsley Davis, the same industrial countries had an average per capita income about *11* times that of the same non-industrial countries. Over this period, moreover, the population of the 15 industrial countries rose by 7.6 percent while that of the 20 non-industrial countries rose by 10.7 percent.

Mr. Dillon, of course, cannot be expected to go so far as to say that the $767 million he is requesting is next to nothing. Democrats would ask why the Administration has not asked for more and the Jenners would argue that all foreign aid is futile. But our officials can and should avoid sanguine assurances which leave us totally unprepared for the future.

Stevenson's Stature

"WHAT WE DO or fail to do now will cast long shadows," Adlai Stevenson told Eric Johnston's foreign aid conference in Washington last week. Stevenson's stature was a dramatic and unmistakable fact even in this impressive gathering. When the array of head table celebrities filed past the dais at the big evening dinner, it was Stevenson, more than anyone else (including the Presidential guest of honor), who drew spontaneous, prolonged applause.

Stevenson advanced at least two ideas which place his leadership in aid policy far ahead of the Administration and most members of Congress. He reiterated his plea for a coordinated approach to aid by the United States and Western Europe. And he expressed once again his belief that the Soviet bluff can be called:

> One can think with a certain zest of taking on Mr. Khrushchev . . . of welcoming the competition in foreign aid and urging the Russians to meet us on a matching basis. "We'll provide half the capital for Nile development. Come on, Mr. Khrushchev, what about the other half? You will? Good—we'll do it together through the World Bank. You won't? Well, we understand that Communism isn't yet productive enough, so we'll do it ourselves. Better luck when next we try—which we shall do next year and the year after that and the year after that and on and on until kingdom come . . ."

The day after Stevenson's speech, we were glad to note, Sen. John F. Kennedy (D, Mass.) joined in appealing for a coordinated free world aid policy. But by and large, for all of the weeping and wailing about stale ideas, how little response seems to greet new proposals when they *are* made.

Britain's Defense

THE ANNUAL British Government "white paper" on defense is an institution for which there is, unfortunately, no parallel in this country. About this time each year the Minister for Defense makes available to the public a statement of his plans for the year. What distinguishes this statement are two features that contrast sharply with the practice of our government. First, it is readable, the complexities that make understanding the American defense budget a task for experts being reduced to simple factual terms that any voter can understand. Second, in addition to the facts there is offered a rationale for the plan. Since the advent of nuclear weapons this annual justification has resulted in a running account of the prevailing theoretical speculations within the British Government upon the meaning of the new form of war.

Last year's white paper, the first to be produced by the Macmillan Government with Mr. Duncan Sandys as Minister for Defense, in essence announced a program of drastic economies justified by two things: dependence upon the nuclear "deterrent" to prevent any war that would endanger Britain's survival and recognition of Britain's irrevocable commitment to joint defense action under United States leadership in any emergency that was not a purely domestic disturbance within the surviving empire.

For all the larger issues, the 1957 white paper gave the impression that Britain's defense effort was determined, not by what might be required to defend Britain's interests, but by what might be expected to give Britain a hearing in the coalition councils that the US would lead. Hence the continued emphasis upon a British contribution to the forces of strategic retaliation, including the production of nuclear weapons. Hence also the new emphasis upon nuclear armament of the forces that might be employed in limited war, which, it was claimed, would increase their power even as their numbers were being reduced.

The white paper did not, however, envisage the possibility that war in Western Europe could be limited, and for this it was roundly criticized by the proponents of "tactical nuclear war" and "graduated deterrence." At the same time, the force reductions called for, particularly as they affected the British Army of the Rhine, produced strong criticism from other countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The latest defense white paper, released in February by Mr. Duncan Sandys, in general continues the program laid down last year. The conceptual point that made the headlines was:

> . . . it must be understood that, if Russia were to launch *a major attack* on [the democratic Western nations], *even with conventional forces only,* they would

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> *have* to hit back with strategic nuclear weapons. (Italics ours.)

But later, in a section headed "Conventional Forces," it is said:

> The strategic nuclear deterrent is the decisive factor *in preventing major war.* But it does not obviate the need for maintaining a substantial shield of land forces, with air and naval support, *to defend the frontiers of the free world.* Nor could it, of course, be used *in localized emergencies,* still less *for preserving order and stability.*

These two statements could be interpreted to mean that the British Government had reached the best possible solution—possibly the only real solution—of the incredibly difficult problems of defense in the nuclear era. Certainly the Russians must be made to realize (we believe they do already) that any major aggression, such as an attempt to conquer Western Europe, or even West Germany (since it is the key to Western Europe), cannot conceivably be limited, but must be Act One of Armageddon. But we cannot assume that this "deterrent" awareness will prevent *all* situations from arising that call for the employment of military force. To deal with threats of limited aggression as well as with local outbreaks that might eventuate in limited conflict between East and West, the West requires conventional forces—in complex array from local police patrols to sizable task forces containing ground, air, and sea elements such as were engaged in the Korean War. (It is doubtful if even the US has these now, as the Gaither Committee pointed out. And the possibility of getting them has become more remote since Sputnik and the new emphasis on missiles.)

But it is not clear what Mr. Sandys means by a "major war," nor that defense of "the frontiers of the free world" suggests anything more than those "brushfires" that we can presumably handle without extending ourselves anyway. If a "major" war is *any* war we cannot "win" with our present forces without resorting to the use of nuclear weapons, then the British Government, like our own, is subordinating commonsense in national strategy to the budget.

It may or may not be significant that this year's white paper, unlike last year's makes no reference to the use of nuclear weapons in limited war. Mr. Sandys' omission, after having several times mentioned the employment of nuclear weapons by British forces in what must have been conceived as limited engagements last year, looks like a deliberate disavowal of his Parliamentary critics, who have been demanding the "graduated deterrence" based upon "small" nuclear weapons be explicitly recognized as British policy. But what seems more likely is that Mr. Sandys has intentionally left the issue in doubt, in order partly to take advantage of the deterrent effect of uncertainty on this point, but, more important, to await a clearer indication of the lead of the US.

The irony of the situation is that while our government would probably agree upon the prudence of a conventional defense in most of the limited contingencies that are foreseeable—at least this can be read between the lines of some of the things Mr. Dulles has been saying for the last year or so—it feels that the bulk of the ground forces for a conventional defense must come from our allies. But the British Government's policy seems to suggest, by way of contradiction, that if limited wars are to be fought conventionally the bulk of the forces must be of some origin other than British. Moreover, it is probably only a matter of time until others of our allies follow the British lead, as the Germans may already be doing. There is room for more than one at the bargain counter, and the shoddiness of the merchandise won't discourage the bargain hunters, particularly those whose purse is barer than ours.

Hereditary Playpens?

OUR SYMPATHY, complete with scotch tape, duco cement, and a caster with the right-sized seating, goes to Mr. Black, whose article describing the ruins of his playpen appears on pages 8 and 9. As any schoolboy old enough to use razor blades knows, many companies do very well by themselves with replacement markets. But how many young couples encourage manufacturers of the nasty because they will buy only the cheap? Almost every other family in the country—and particularly the young ones starting homes and families—has mortgaged some of its future income in order to have current use of a house, a car, kitchen equipment. In the budgets of more than half of these families between $10 and $40 of every $100 of weekly or monthly income is committed to an installment schedule. So when it comes to the purchase of the relatively smaller items needed for child-rearing, the producer with the low-price tag has exploitable advantage. The manufacturer of the playpen that will not last through the childhood of a three-child family, let alone remain in shape to be passed on to them in their turn, may know that this is a poor kind of business, and so may buyers as disillusioned as the Blacks, but the system meets a good many current conveniences originating on both sides of the counter.

Art and Politics

"IF," writes a subscriber in our correspondence columns this week, "you replaced Gerald Johnson with David Lawrence and signed up Walter Kerr as your drama critic, *The New Republic* would be a more appropriate magazine for the art criticism of Frank Getlein."

Art criticism is, of course, Mr. Getlein's province: the

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relation of art and politics is a common concern. And here, all epithets about "objective" and "non-objective" art aside, our subscriber raises a familiar argument that we have never been able fully to comprehend.

To be a true liberal, implies this subscriber, one must also be for abstract expressionism in painting. Why? Because abstract expressionism is contemporary? So is the hydrogen bomb. Because it is exploring the hitherto unexplored? So is Dr. J. B. Rhine who has done some interesting work on psychic phenomena. Are we delinquent in not endorsing all his works as well? If liberals in politics are necessarily abstract expressionists in art, does it follow that abstract expressionists must necessarily be liberals? We hope not. Will some kind reader guide us out of the tunnel?

American Culture In Search of Angels—II

IF ARTISTS and creative thinkers are to receive adequate support, new methods of obtaining and administering funds, to replace the gifts of the moneyed patrons of past generations, will have to be invented. As we noted last week, the angels who a generation ago used to sponsor the arts so lavishly are, for the most part, gone—their feathers plucked by time and income tax.

A generation ago, the canvasser for artistic causes had a fairly simple task. Budgets seeking angels necessarily had to fly high, since in 1929 some 29 million of the country's 36 million families were living on incomes that ranged downward from $2,500, and in homes where the search for food, shelter, clothing was unceasing, requests for support of the activities that make the difference between an economy and a culture could expect only rare response. The philanthropist in the upper-income ranges to whom appeals were almost exclusively addressed was able to respond to the more elusive interests of eye, ear and mind after satisfying the solid demands of the stomach; if he could once be convinced of the worth of a project, there was little question that he could afford to support it.

Today's philanthropist, however, must be located more and more often in the middle-income brackets: the incomes of two out of three of the nation's 52 million families fall in the $3,000-$10,000 range. And while the family with $7,500 does have money left over after meeting its primary needs, appeals to use that money for culture come into direct competition with the enticements of mass-advertisers to buy the latest in consumer goods. Furthermore, the form of appeal suitable to yesterday's giver has little relevance to the $7,500-a-year family, and not too much progress has been made in it.

The absence of suitable contemporary techniques for supporting culture is emphasized by the degree of response to such techniques as do exist.

When a middle-income family can purchase culture on a retail basis, current sales reflect an interest that is very widespread. The number of homes with hi-fi sets, discriminating appreciation of performance, and sizable libraries of good music; the response to paper-bound reprints of serious books; the attendance at off-Broadway and summer circuit theatre and dance, all prove it. But where support cannot be accumulated through individual purchases, collection of funds is currently unnecessarily low. So a variety of new methods of support is being developed:

a. annual giving by individuals, either on a community basis or in support of an institution like a college;
b. contributions by industrial organizations in their capacity as "corporate citizens";
c. support by tax-exempt foundations, both the small number of large bodies established with wealth of the pre-World War II period, and the rather large number of smaller family funds set up by current upper-income families to facilitate tax-free giving;
d. government grants, for which the tax power is used to obtain money.

We shall be commenting on these techniques in upcoming issues.

HELEN HILL MILLER

A Note on Material Progress

WE HAVE a little boy about ten months old, a fact that bears on the national economy only in a limited statistical way. Yet I have been brought, by his existence and needs, to new insights into the national economy. What I have learned makes me sick.

I won't say anything about prices, though I sometimes wonder whether those who guide such matters think of having children as an avocation of rich lunatics. Instead, I will talk about things. For example, the carriage. Ours is well attested by repute and advertising. Quite early, two washers, held in place by little more than abstract intent, fell off. These turned out to have been all that fastened a part of the shade, which now dangled. Dangling as well, at about eye level when the boy raises himself, were the metal rods that supported the shade. My wife taped them to the sides as soon as she noticed them, which happened to be soon enough.

We bought a "stroller." The fabric very soon came

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unstitched at several points. One result is that the boy can wiggle out through the opening where a front retaining piece should be. Luckily, we don't have to concern ourselves with the dangers (centering mainly about the neck) which this entails, since incredibly, the seat itself was supported only by the fabric, and the stitching that held the supporting edges is also gone. The whole article, on close inspection, turns out shoddy and dangerous, in ways too complicated to broach without slides; we like to think that the benign manufacturer's motive in putting the thing together with spiderwebs was to insure its early dissolution and so to shorten the time of risk for his small vicarious customers.

We got a "playpen." The rod holding the bright plastic toys broke in a few weeks. Fortunately, my wife was near, to take care of the jagged metal point; our boy puts everything in his mouth. She has rigged something to keep him from getting his head caught in the space left open. We are keeping our fingers crossed about the sharp edges of the cheap hinges all over the inner surface. They could have been set in flush with the wood, they could have been rounded and smoothed. But they don't actually look lethal or maiming, and we are in a mood for compromise.

We bought a "jump-seat." It was "adjustable"; he could sit up and join the party, "jumping" if he liked, or lean back and drink a bottle. Trouble is, the device that loosens the back for "adjustment" is about as easy for him to work in the course of his random explorations as it is for us to work on purpose. When it is loosened, the back falls all the way. When all this was dramatically proved before our hitherto unsuspecting eyes, a lady guest was fortunately close enough to save the boy from an otherwise inevitable cracking of his head on a lower back bar.

My wife has since wired the "adjusting" device into immobility; all we have to worry about now is that if he wiggles, in the standing or "jumping" position, he can easily (and without, I may say in his favor, intending it) work the plastic-fiber back of the seat out of the wire frame in which it is loosely set, and take a nasty fall. My wife is considering that problem, and will doubtless come up with something.

All this has restored my faith in the penitentiary as a wholesome institution, with some changes in the criteria for being sent there. Nor have I exhausted our experiences; there was a crib, a car-seat. . . .

But so far I have only toyed with my subject. Let me move on.

Our boy (I hope he never reads this) wears diapers. You pin these on with safety pins. We bought a special kind of safety pin. It has a guard so designed that it is virtually impossible for the pointed end to work out of the guard. "New." "Improved."

Just one thing. After a certain amount of normal wear, the guard itself works loose, and a slight pressure will then snap the pin to the open position. Usually, the punch is telegraphed by a softening of the guard, and by its chipping and flaking a little around the edges and showing some play. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety-pinning. If vigilance, in some brain-addling emergency of baby care, should flag, or if the warning signals should not occur in the proper order. . . .

Now I deny flatly, on all common sense, that it is technically impossible or even difficult to make a safety pin with a guard that will stay on, humanly speaking, forever. I cannot believe, on all the probabilities, that anyone who makes a pin with a guard that will work loose doesn't know what he is doing. But how many diaper pins would you sell, if diaper pins were made right?

Nobody ever loses one; they're off the baby only a short time at changing, and are carefully controlled then. Properly made, they would descend as heirlooms. Clearly, if the safety pin industry is to prosper, and contribute to a healthy national economy, safety pins *must* fail; the one thing unreasonable, to the very point of contradiction in terms, is to ask that a safety pin fail in a safe way. *Caveat infans.*

When they sell me a tin-can car, pasted-up furniture, ephemeral light-bulbs, breakaway clothes, razor-blades that dull on exposure to air, adulterated and imitation food—even when they twist the knife by calling it "new" and "improved"—I mutter awhile and forget it. I even tell myself that somewhere, yet living or gone to bliss, there may be an economist who knows the answer to it all, as theologians know why there is evil; I have heard of "dynamic consumption" and "planned obsolescence," though I command none of the wisdom these terms encapsulate.

But there is a limit.

A CULTURE that gives its children equipment that is so shoddily made as to conceal multiple danger, and that must be known to be so by the gentlemen who serve this function and so get rich, is in a bad enough state that somebody needs to say something about it. When a culture produces, as a material artifact for wide sale and use, a pin so made as to threaten to rake or pierce the bellies of infants, to the end that Mother may ever and anon return and buy yet another pin, that culture is sick, sicker than we let ourselves admit. If this were an isolated symptom, disconformable to the wide pattern. . . . But then why bother with that? We know it is not.

That safety pin should be used especially for a deft and strong jab at the whole great tawdry flimsy patched balloon.

CHARLES L. BLACK, JR.

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Poland—Limited Hopes, Limited Freedom

Warsaw

DESPITE continued economic chaos, despite the virtual abdication of the Communist Party from its former administrative rule of the country, Mr. Gomulka's Poland today exhibits a political stability which eluded the Communist regime during the first twelve years of its existence.

It is a stability based on apathy and resignation of the predominantly anti-Communist population. Disillusioned in their high hopes after the "Polish October" of 1956, the Poles nevertheless have no wish for what they brand the "Hungarian November." And it is this ever-present danger of Soviet intervention that has enabled Mr. Gomulka successfully to silence "revisionist" attempts to expand political democracy. The press and intellectuals who prepared Mr. Gomulka's dramatic return to power and who a year ago were still busy analyzing the root causes of "Stalinism" have now either fallen into silence or accepted strictures on criticism imposed by the Communist dictatorship. The result: The Poles seem to have lost all active interest in the political life of their country.

At the same time, Mr. Gomulka has thus far kept his promises to remove the excesses of the "Stalinist" period. Police interference in the private life of the individual has been removed. Freedom of expression—spoken if not written—is allowed. Cultural contacts with the West are flourishing, and any attempt to curtail them has met with strong popular resistance. One saw this in a dramatic way at the beginning of February, when the Ministry of Finance hastily rescinded prohibitive passport fees after an outburst of public criticism voiced mainly through the press. In the countryside, private initiative among the peasantry has been maintained, even encouraged. Finally, the truce between the Catholic Church and the state remains in force.

The mixed feelings of the Poles toward the system came out in the recent elections in some 10,000 city, town and village constituencies. Eighty-five percent of the electorate cast a ballot, and there was no evidence of any direct coercion. Yet, there was little of the interest and none of the enthusiasm which surrounded the elections to the national Parliament *(Sejm)* a year ago. National personalities and national issues were absent this time, and Mr. Gomulka had no need to repeat his last year's appeal for mass electoral support to bolster his still-insecure position *vis-à-vis* his own party and the Soviet leadership.

These elections were organized exactly as were their predecessors a year ago. The 300,000 candidates appeared on single lists of the "National Unity Front"—the alliance of the leading United Workers Party (Communist) which put forward 51 percent of the candidates, the United Peasants Party (ZSL) and the Democratic Party (SD). Since there were approximately 50 percent more candidates than places open, the electorate could express its choice in secret through striking names from the list. This system favors the top candidates on every list; any ballot deposited without deletions—the recommended way of voting—is counted for the officially-preferred candidates at the top of the ballot.

The disinterest in the capital and other large cities —where polling was well below the national average —was balanced by the real interest shown in small industrial towns and villages. In these small constituencies, the campaign became more of a personal affair. Candidates actually competed for their place on the ballot and for their election. Electoral meetings called before the polling day to express support for the tentative lists of the "Unity Front" frequently deposed some candidates and substituted others. The meetings became an outlet for serious economic and personal grievances, particularly where corrupt bureaucratic elements survived the preliminary nominating process. More than once the meetings ended in chaos. Polling which I observed in the countryside suggested that more than 65 percent of the voters did make use of their right to strike names out in private.

THIS limited use of "grass-roots" democracy is part of the regime's less dramatic attempt to rebuild its power from the base upwards. There has been a genuine effort to infuse new life in the local governmental organs. New candidates—mainly doctors, lawyers, teachers—figured heavily on the lists, and it is they who will apply the new law on local Peoples Councils passed by the Parliament only a week before the elections. Under this law, newly-elected councils are to have vastly increased budgetary and administrative power over local industry, building, trade and agriculture—areas which are presently the first concern of the majority of people in this poor country.

These measures aim at overcoming the complete disintegration of social life which occurred during the "Stalinist" era. By 1956 all social intercourse had become submerged beneath the dead weight of a monolithic state, with people living in fear and in isolation from one another. Now, Mr. Gomulka wants to maintain a modicum of central control over the country through his depleted state and party bureaucracy, while simultaneously bringing the communal structure back to life through the return of power, responsibility, and limited independence.

GEORGE SHERMAN

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COMMUNICATION

The Nonsense About Recession and Inflation

SIRS:

YOUR EDITORIAL of February 24 is charitable in attributing "some of the freshest" economic thinking to the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, based upon your ascribing to it the view that 1957 marked the "end of an aftermath," and that "there might be ahead a new 'interboom period' not of recession but of slower growth in output and income, higher unemployment, and, at the same time, inflation."

The description by the Bank of the period said to be ahead of us is in fact highly characteristic of what has been happening in our economy since 1953, and a realization of this is essential to full comprehension of the current economic situation and outlook. The rate of our national growth in output, measured in uniform dollars, fell from a 4.7 percent annual average during 1947-1953 to 2.7 percent during 1953-1957, and to less than 1 percent from 1956 to 1957. As an inevitable outcome of this progressive slowdown in the rate of growth, total output declined 1.7 percent from fourth quarter 1956 to fourth quarter 1957, and declined at an annual rate of 6.6 percent from third to fourth quarter 1957. Consumer incomes during this five-year period as a whole showed an even more unfavorable trend, which explains the excessive expansion of credit to support even the deficient rate of economic growth. Unemployment rose in the long-term over this period, some of it concealed for a time, but more of it now becoming overt. And especially after the beginning of 1956, price inflation was phenomenal in a retarded economy. Some of us have been insistently calling attention to these trends in Congressional testimony and in very widely publicized publications at least since 1954, including a number of articles in *The New Republic*—the most recent on January 13, 1958.

It is not correct in the main that our output since World War II has been sustained largely by postwar "backlogs" which have now vanished. Output has been sustained mainly by currently generated income and its distribution. Insofar as public and private economic policies have progressively failed during these years to generate sufficient consumer income and, even more important, have failed to promote other than a regressive redistribution of this income, the economy has moved to lower and lower rates of output growth, and has now moved into a serious recession. The people, or at least 50 million of them, still have great unsatisfied wants and needs; they do not have the purchasing power to expand their buying.

The nonsense in which so many economic analysts have indulged on the subject of postwar "backlogs" is fantastic. We did have *some* backlogs immediately after World War II. But during the past 10 years or so, we have been buying the automobiles and television sets and other things to replace those that we bought to replace those that we had at the start of World War II. We got into a real depression a year and a half after World War I, not because there were no "backlogs" after that war, but rather because we did not create new purchasing power to substitute for the buying of war goods. We had a higher demand for educational services and housing and facilities to enter small business after World War II than after World War I, not because of more "backlogs," but rather because of more programs to provide these opportunities for people who had never enjoyed them at all before World War II.

Also, after World War II, due to structural changes occurring during the New Deal and in consequence of the war, we achieved broader distribution of private income than after World War I. It is the diminishing effectiveness of these adjustments, rather than the disappearance of "backlogs," which explains our poor performance during the past few years and the current economic recession. The only genuine waning of demand—that is wants and needs—as a great war fades further into the background, is in the demand for war goods. The silly talk about "backlogs" is a blind euphemistic way of hiding our inability to meet human wants and needs, which are always present, through the full utilization of our productive capabilities. Is there no "backlog" of unsatisfied wants and needs today for schools, or truly American living standards, or anything else? Have we stopped forming families and breeding children? In the over-all, have the people stopped wanting higher living standards? The real thing that has disappeared is a sufficiency of applied economic brainpower and social conscience to move forward.

☆

While it is true that we need much more public spending to restore reasonably full employment and production, as well as to meet our great priorities of national needs, the argument that we face a mutually exclusive choice between a much bigger federal budget and substantive tax reductions dangerously misreads the plain facts about the current economic situation, and plays into the hands of those whose proposals on all fronts are entirely inadequate. Many professional economists are very guilty on this score.

Unemployment (4.5 million according to the Census survey in mid-January, more than 5 million now by the same kind of count) is by now at least 3 million above the desirable minimum. This, along with an irregularly shortened work week and other "uncounted" unemployment, and along with seriously inadequate pay in many areas, accounts for a deficiency of more than $20 billion in wage and salary income as of the end of 1957. Adding to this a deficiency of several billion dollars in farm income, the total deficiency in consumer income correlates precisely with a deficiency of more than $32 billion in total output as of the end of 1957 measured against a full production level of output. This deficiency in total output has become much bigger by mid-February; and in addition to the need to close this gap in order to restore reasonably full employment and full production, there is need for still an additional growth of $15-20 billion a year in total output to absorb the continuing growth in population, labor force and productivity. *So within a year or*

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so from now, we need in the neighborhood of a $50 billion growth in total output to bring us to reasonably full use of our resources by that time.

Measured against these magnitudes, neither the $4-5 billion tax reduction proposed by Senator Douglas (which in general seems to me to be in the right direction), nor an increase by itself of the same amount in federal spending (which is the minimum increase in such expenditures that we need), would alone be sufficient to restore and maintain reasonably full employment and full production. We need action along both of these lines. We also need great readjustments in price-wage-profit and consumption-investment relationships; but to re-create a suitable environment for these, we need government action first.

Dr. Sumner Slichter in the *NR* of March 3 forecasts that the recession should end very shortly and suggests some mild measures toward this end. Whether or not this forecast turns out to be excessively optimistic, Dr. Slichter seems to me to miss the main point that our immediate task is not merely to stop the absolute down turn, but more important, to restore a full economy and an acceptable rate of economic growth. For this reason, his rejection of tax reduction and expanded public works seems to me undesirable. His concern that tax reduction now would be inflationary next year seems (a) inconsistent with his own frequently expressed view that full employment is more important than absolute price stability, and (b), neglectful of the point that recent price inflation has not at all been due to excessive consumer demand or government deficits, but rather to a behavior pattern within the administered price system which requires remedies other than fiscal or monetary policy. Moreover, this problem is aggravated rather than alleviated by a repressed rather than a fully expanding economy, which Dr. Slichter himself seems to recognize.

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The appalling lack of recognition, in almost all quarters, of the size of the task immediately confronting us indicates that, while we may tardily take the minimum measures needed to reverse the recession, we shall thereby re-enter, not a new period, but rather the old period which has bedeviled us for a number of years now, characterized again by a dangerously inadequate rate of growth in output and income, a consequent long-term rise in unemployment, and the resumption of price inflation in a retarded economy. Such a resumption of partial progress would again end up inevitably in another recession. The frequency of recessions since 1949 is highly indicative. Meanwhile, the Russians are expanding their production by 7-10 percent a year. They are "affording" what they think they need, while we think we "cannot afford" what we know we need.

As for inflation, recent years have demonstrated conclusively that low sights on employment and production result in more price inflation than full employment and production except in periods of war or quick transition from war to peace. The misreading of the causes of the new inflation has been the most tragically costly of all recent errors in national economic policies.

LEON KEYSERLING

Solution for Germany?—I

Adenauer's Terms for A Unified Germany

Bonn

EACH YEAR since 1953 German reunification has retreated farther over the horizon. Each year there are rather fewer incurable optimists in both parts of divided Germany. Each year there is a less confident ring in the assertions of West German politicians that Germany must be "reunified in peace and freedom, and by free, All-German elections."

These facts must be kept in mind whenever consideration is being given to the problem of a settlement in Central Europe which would end the unnatural division of Germany and, possibly, bring a relaxation of tension between East and West as its natural corollary. Germans are no less insistent upon the need to reunite their country than they were four years ago. But they are less hopeful than they were.

As of today, what terms would the West Germans be ready to accept for a form of reunification? (Whether these terms would be acceptable to the Soviet Union is a separate question). Dr. Adenauer's foreign policy does not deviate by a hairsbreadth. On January 15 he dismissed the latest note from Marshal Bulganin as "a Soviet propaganda gambit and nuisance-maneuver of considerable scope." He explicitly denied that there was any evidence of "an earnest Soviet intention to come to an understanding." In the same speech, which was broadcast over all West German radio stations, Dr. Adenauer rejected the two ideas which seem, today, to be twin babies of the Soviet Union's German policy. He argued that the German people had a fundamental right to their unity and freedom and dismissed as utterly unacceptable the Russian plan—sponsored by Khrushchev and enunciated last summer by East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl—for a "confederation" of both German states. He dismissed equally bluntly the Soviet plan for a "nuclear-free zone" in Central Europe. "The creation of this zone," he said, "would mean the end of NATO and, as a result, the end of the freedom of Western Europe and of us Germans."

The Adenauer thesis still insists upon free, All-German elections, and the creation of a united German Parliament which reflects the freely-expressed wishes of the whole German people. Dr. Adenauer still believes that this is the only legitimate objective for his government, and that any attempt at compromise with Soviet notions

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would merely produce fresh Russian demands and a more intractable attitude toward the German wish—laid down in somewhat inflexible terms in the West, and unspoken but indubitable in the East—for reunification in freedom.

There is virtually no chance of Dr. Adenauer's ever revising his present attitude. Answering Marshal Bulganin's note on January 21, he wrote,

> You yourself state that the vital interests of the nations demand that all states acknowledge the principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, territorial inviolability and sovereignty, non-aggression, complete equality of rights and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. Why does the Soviet Union persist in refusing to apply these principles to the German people too?

Two days later Foreign Minister Von Brentano repeated his government's and party's explicit rejection of the idea of a "German Confederation." The Bulganin proposals for a solution of the German problem might just as well have never been formulated.

Does Dr. Adenauer carry the 53 million inhabitants of Western Germany with him in this refusal to modify his terms for German reunification? Two recent public-opinion polls suggest growing doubts in the German community. Only 32 percent of those asked by the Dusseldorf "Intermarket" Public Opinion Institute opted for firm alignment of the Federal Republic with the West. Admittedly just two percent opted for alignment with the Soviet Union, but 34 percent preferred the maxim: "It is best to bind Germany to both East and West in some security system." Another 20 percent wanted a juridically neutral Germany which—like Switzerland—would be linked to no outside power. And 74 percent of those asked by the EMNID Institute in Bielefeld neither wanted nuclear weapons given to Western Germany nor nuclear firing-bases erected on its soil. To the desire to find for Germany some sort of "middle position" between East and West was added a disinclination to accord uncommitted cooperation to NATO.

Implicit in the rejection of nuclear weapons for Germany—a rejection caused by fear, thrift and a host of more intelligible political arguments—was an instinctive readiness to accept the "Rapacki Plan" for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. Yet the Rapacki Plan—quite apart from its automatic rejection by the West German Government—aroused little interest in the West German press. One paper, the *Munchner Merkur,* analyzed it in these terms:

> That Poland, governed today by a rather unusual Communist regime, attempts to loosen cautiously the grip in which it is held by Moscow is perfectly credible. Realization of plans for a thinned out zone of armaments, a "sea of peace" in the Baltic and a nuclear-free area would secure Poland's special position within the Soviet Bloc and give her more elbow room. But what would be an advantage to Poland appears to us, on this side of the Iron Curtain, only theoretically as a gain. In practice the creation of an atom-free zone without a simultaneous settlement of the German problem, or the achievement of a measure of general disarmaments, would paralyze NATO, destroy the foundations of German security, outmaneuver German foreign policy and perpetuate the division of Germany.

The Rapacki Plan dropped into true perspective as a Polish plan designed to further Polish interests. This is not to decry its merits. But it could have little attraction for German policy-makers.

It is necessary to write at length about the feelings of the Bonn Government—and of circles friendly to the government's foreign policy—mainly because this Adenauer Government is so strongly entrenched in Parliament and so perfectly mirrors the current absorption of the German community in its own material well-being. As the polls suggest, the German community will produce certain reflex actions—of alarm over the prospect of nuclear warfare waged in the heart of Europe, and of indignation over the continuing division of Germany. But these reflex actions do not in any sense suggest desertion of a regime which has made 53 million West Germans prosper. Fort hat a clearly-defined focus of oposition to the Adenauer foreign policy would be necessary.

Does such a focus exist?

There are today three particular groups which not only reject the Adenauer foreign policy but are ready to consider the only practical alternative—which is that, sooner or later, the East-West all-German talks desired by the Russians may have to take place. I shall discuss each of these groups next week.

TERENCE PRITTIE

First of two articles.

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The Case for Harold Stassen

by CHALMERS M. ROBERTS

HAROLD STASSEN had barely had time to properly frame his "Dear Harold" letter from President Eisenhower before he demonstrated once again how much he is going to be missed in Washington. The term "missed" should not be misunderstood, of course. It is close to impossible to find any politician here in either party, and especially in Stassen's own party, who felt anything short of unrestrained joy to see him leave.

But the term "missed" does apply to those both in and out of the Administration who have labored long and hard to find some way to slow down, if not to halt, the rocketing arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. This group inside the Administration is not as small as one might suppose but it is now leaderless, given the departure of the one-time boy Governor of Minnesota in search of the GOP gubernatorial nomination in Pennsylvania.

It is not very difficult to draw a parallel between Stassen and George F. Kennan, the former State Department official quickly booted out when John Foster Dulles took office. The major stir provoked by Kennan's BBC lectures this winter, and the violent reactions at the State Department, arose from the same sort of antipathy shown Stassen. Both men are eggheads, both are idea producers, both try to make others think through tough problems. And both have been reviled for trying.

The outcome in Kennan's case remains obscure; so far he has dented the surface but not much more, as far as official Washington is concerned. But in Stassen's case the results have been considerably greater. And the end of the Stassen influence is not yet in sight.

This was demonstrated by the two articles which he wrote for newspapers just after leaving office. In them Stassen said out loud some of the things he had been arguing for privately at the National Security Council table before President Eisenhower but on which the President had accepted Dulles' rather than Stassen's view.

There is no question that a good part of Stassen's difficulties in the three years, less one month, he was the Presidential assistant for disarmament sprang from his own personality, above all from his overweening political ambition. Newsmen who have covered him as a Presidential candidate, as administrator of foreign aid and as the disarmament chief were fed up with his egotism, his bland self-assurance, his utter inability to say "I was wrong" or even "I don't know." A good many also were repelled by the McCarthy-type job he once did on Philip Jessup while in search of issues in the '56 campaign.

These characteristics, and they could be added to, would be enough to condemn to outer darkness any ordinary political figure. Yet for some reason Stassen retains a hold on a reasonable fragment of the voters (as distinguished from party leaders). In a Gallup poll last November, Republican voters gave Vice President Nixon 48 percent, Senator Knowland 12 percent and Stassen 8 percent, up from 7 percent three months earlier. And Stassen had 10 percent among independents compared to 24 percent for Nixon and 12 percent for Knowland.

The answer to the Stassen popularity, such as it is, and to the reason why this reporter is bold enough to say that he will be "missed" in Washington lies on the other side of the Stassen coin. This is the Stassen who is dogged and determined, who has the kind of courage which often appears ridiculous (the dump-Nixon affair) but is more fairly described as just plain guts, who works incredibly hard aided by something close to a photographic memory, who understands the nature of today's world and the meaning of today's weapons, whose antennae are far more in tune than are Dulles' with Eisenhower's often vague sense of national aspirations and yet, as a close associate once put it, a man "who has his big feet really planted in the soil" of America.

In an Administration where brains were less suspect than is the current case, Stassen might have been just another bright boy. But the past three years, wrestling with the most complicated of international subjects, in a jungle of bureaucratic infighting, in an alliance of jealous sovereigns, Stassen has been an outstanding figure. He deserves to be called no less. And his departure is a loss of considerable, perhaps even critical, importance at this juncture of relations between Washington and Moscow.

Of course, Stassen has not always been "right" on disarmament. In the first place there is no set of calipers to measure "right," "wrong" or anything else in the arms control field. In the second place so much of the infighting in Washington has been behind closed doors and so many of the deliberate leaks, usually in the form of background sessions (including a number by Stassen himself as well as Dulles and others), have been self-serving that it has been immensely difficult to arrive at the facts of who was arguing for what and who stuck the knife in whose back and just when and why.

CHALMERS M. ROBERTS, *diplomatic reporter for the* Washington Post, *has covered developments in the arms field for most of Mr. Stassen's three years at the White House.*

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For a while Stassen sat in a big office across the street from the White House and nobody paid any attention to him; except, that is, to lampoon him as "Childe Harold" or to dub him the "Secretary of Peace." What slowly woke up State, the Pentagon and the Atomic Energy Commission (and the Central Intelligence Agency which more often than not, unlike the others, furnished support for Stassen) was the flood of Soviet disarmament proposals. In time Stassen found himself fighting to win approval here for counter-proposals.

But it was not until last summer that America's allies began to pay much more than passing attention to this curious man's activities; then suddenly they began to think he might be on the point of an agreement with the Russians and, worst of all, of a Soviet-American agreement. The whoop and the holler against Stassen which resulted in his being called home three times from the London arms talk (and once reprimanded by Eisenhower) was the result of this sudden allied awakening, despite numerous British sneers that "we never took it very seriously" as one high official put it. (I do not wish here to cast any blanket condemnation over the many devoted allied officials who worked with Stassen in one way or another. But for the most part their principals kissed him off with lip service as they often did the high-sounding Eisenhower phrases about disarmament, including the "open skies" proposal made at Geneva in 1955.

What, then, was Stassen trying to do? His major premise, from beginning to end, was simple: that in this nuclear weapons age there was a mutually recognized aim in both Moscow and Washington to prevent a holocaust and that each side was prepared to pay some price to lessen the possibility of such an occurrence, especially by what Stassen called in his recent articles "misunderstanding" or "miscalculation." It was on that same premise that the President declared in late 1955 that there can be "no alternative to peace."

This premise was, and is, one that no one could challenge before the President at an NSC meeting. It was the strength of Stassen's "big stroke" approach, as it has been called. His trouble was in getting it implemented; the same trouble that has plagued many other Administration officials who thought they had won by merely getting the "D.D.E." initials on an NSC paper embodying their ideas. The President simply would not bother with the detailed follow-through that was necessary, and his illnesses served to limit Stassen's ability to go to him directly when the infighting between him and the State Department and Pentagon was hottest.

Shortly after Stassen resigned, his long-time aide, Robert E. Matteson, in an illuminating though discreet speech in Minneapolis, described the rival Stassen and Dulles approaches, though without tagging them that directly. The former he termed a "relaxation of tension" policy "which would recognize the strength of the Soviet bloc and would do more to encourage the liberalizing tendencies within the bloc. It would accept the Soviet as an equal power and would encourage the gradual evolution of the Soviet system toward freedom."

The Dulles approach, as Matteson described it, is an "increased pressure" policy,

> one which would emphasize more the weakness of the Soviet bloc, would look toward pressuring the Soviet leadership into agreements which represent concessions by the Soviets to their own interest, and would look toward striving to pressure the Soviet system into a collapse without a war.

Matteson conceded that these descriptions represented a "necessary over-simplification," which is true, but he added for the record that both here and in other Free World capitals there exists "in the policy formulation process . . . a day-to-day competition between the major emphases of these two different concepts." Stassen saw the speech before it was delivered; his two articles are in tune with it as are private remarks made to a number of newsmen and others. Matteson didn't get fired but is expected to leave before long, now that Dulles has succeeded in liquidating the Stassen independent operation.

It is clear from what Matteson said that the Stassen-Dulles disagreements went to the basis of American foreign policy, of which disarmament policies are only one facet. Dulles, a skilled man in infighting, has generally had his way by the simple tactic of agreeing with the Eisenhower-Stassen premises and later winning his point on the detailed work. But not always. And the result of Stassen's three years work has been to move the United States a long way toward the Soviet Union, which itself has moved what amounts to approximately an equal distance in our direction. The shame is that Stassen has been dumped, for that is what it amounted to, at this time.

Although Dulles has publicly said there can be "no meeting of the minds" between the US and the USSR, this reporter is not willing to say that Dulles has opposed a disarmament agreement or even that he never believed one possible. He was highly skeptical and over cautious and often dubious of Stassen's ideas. But when the Soviets moved, Dulles was willing to let Stassen move some, too, though not as much as Stassen desired.

It would take a book to detail the long, often dreary story of the arms talks since the Soviet proposal of May 10, 1955, which first indicated a serious post-Stalin Soviet interest. It is sufficient to consider two phases.

The Russians long have hammered away for an end to nuclear testing, usually coupled with "ban the bomb" and scrapping of American bases overseas. But when they cut out the latter two conditions, Stassen went full steam ahead for a test ban offer by the United States. Even before the Russians went that far, however, Stassen had fought for a test-ban offer, including testing of the then rudimentary missiles.

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This effort culminated in the September 11, 1956, National Security Council meeting at which, this reporter has been told on what he considers unimpeachable authority, the President agreed to make an offer to stop both bomb and missile testing. Unhappily this Stassen triumph, achieved after much battling with the Pentagon and the AEC as well as with Dulles who toward the end reportedly was converted to the Stassen view, became trapped in the Presidential election campaign.

Adlai Stevenson, who may have had a "leak" on the Eisenhower decision, himself proposed a test ban a week later as a major campaign issue. Just how the Eisenhower decision was countermanded is still not clear. But a few days before election when four Democratic Senators demanded of the President to know whether he had reversed himself, a White House statement was put out saying that the Administration "has never given its approval to any proposal for suspending nuclear weapons development and consequent tests without dependable safeguards." The Democrats retorted with the charge of "weasel words," and they appeared to be right.

This setback for Stassen was soon forgotten in the flood of Eisenhower votes and the show of Soviet ruthlessness in Hungary, both a few days later. But by April, 1957, the Soviets gave disarmament a new boost by offering a two- or three-year test suspension with, for the first time, international inspectors inside Russia, and by offering to open a big chunk of Siberia to "open skies" inspection provided we would open half the US.

THE net result was a massive American and allied scurrying about for an answer. After months of semi-public travail, capped by a Dulles flying visit to London, a counter offer was given the Soviets—just before Moscow announced it had perfected the ICBM. In Stassen's view the Dulles visit had scuttled the kind of offer he wanted to make and thus foreclosed any hope of agreement, although it was not until months later that Stassen (or any other top government official here or any allied government or even the American ambassador in Moscow) learned that Dulles had secretly rebuffed a Soviet proposal in the midst of the London talks to send Marshal Georgi Zhukov to America.

Whether a Zhukov visit would have helped close the gap, whether any agreement was in fact possible, is a matter of speculation and nothing more. What is certainly true is that Stassen was balked in his effort to (a) get a Soviet-American agreement as a starter, (b) get an agreement limited to a suspension of tests and some relatively minor points but which would put international inspectors inside both Russia and America, and (c) get an agreement which would try out an "open skies" plus ground inspection scheme in the middle of Europe on both sides of the Iron Curtain but not involving territory of the Big Two.

Dulles demanded that Stassen present no plan without agreement of all NATO nations. One useful result was the first full-dress NATO consultation on a non-military question in NATO's history. But the price was to make the Western offer too lopsided for possible Soviet acceptance. Further, the AEC and the Pentagon got their way in refusing to agree to a test ban without a cut-off of fissionable material production. Here Dulles and the allies played a key role. The British, with only limited nuclear stockpiles, argued they would be left at a disadvantage if tests but not production were halted. And the French said they would forever be kept out of the "nuclear club" which no French Government could agree to unless the Big Two would also stop piling up new weapons, that is, agree to the production cut-off.

This was where things stood when the arms talks were broken off by the Russians. And that is where they stood when Stassen quit. In his two subsequent articles, however, Stassen came up with an idea which could conceivably by-pass part of the impasse: that the US and the USSR alone first agree to suspend tests (with only a study of the production cut-off), that Britain be permitted "to conduct a few more tests" and that France be allowed to "conduct a first nuclear test," which she seems determined to do despite the financial absurdity involved. This was the first time Stassen had said on the record that he had accepted the Soviet idea of a test suspension without a production cut-off.

The Russians, as of the moment of writing, have not commented on Stassen's articles. But it is likely that if his proposals were to become American policy, an agreement could, indeed, be reached with the Soviet Union this year. However, there is not the slightest indication as of now that the Administration will accept such proposals; the President, asked about them at his press conference, threw down at least part of the idea, that of omitting the British and French. But the Russians are contemptuous of Britain and France as military powers. What they want is agreement with the United States.

The irony, perhaps the tragedy, of it all is that in the end it may very well turn out that the Administration will propose what Stassen has suggested—especially if Stassen is able, as he hopes, to create allied pressure on Washington. But, if the clouded crystal ball is not more murky than usual, that is not likely to happen until some new scientific development has added a new difficulty, or the Soviets up their price, or the United States has suffered another propaganda defeat in the long, tortuous process of altering its stance.

There are few certainties in life and very few indeed in the tricky and complicated arms control field. But it's a reasonable assumption that the departure from the Washington scene of Harold E. Stassen has been a grievous blow to the chances for an arms agreement. And if that is so, it is a grievous blow to the chances of escaping from the nuclear arms race and the holocaust which may lie at its end.

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BOOKS & COMMENT

The Towerless Edifice

by Daniel Bell

PERHAPS the most fruitful way of looking at Max Lerner's *America as a Civilization*, is to read it not against de Tocqueville or Bryce, as initial reviewers have, but against the book which consciously or otherwise Lerner was trying to take the measure of, Harold Laski's *The American Democracy*, which was published just ten years ago.

The surface similarities are striking: both are big books; Lerner's is 1036 pages, Laski's, in smaller type, 783 pages. There is an extraordinary congruence in topic: Laski begins with the traditions of America, deals with education, culture, business enterprise, the political system, America as a world power and ends with Americanism as a principle of civilization. Lerner, too, begins with tradition, continues with the idea of America as a civilization, covers the same ground as Laski, although in genuflection to newer concerns adds two chapters on parent-child relations and on American character, and ends with America as a world power.

America as a Civilization, by Max Lerner (Simon and Schuster; $10).

Politically and temperamentally the two have had much in common. Both are prolific writers whose signatures are primarily in the phrases they formulated for the liberal middle-class intelligentsia of the thirties and forties ("the revolution of our time;" "ideas are weapons"). Both were pipers of the popular front ideology but became, Lerner more astringently, anti-Stalinist. Both have been open, gregarious, buoyant, academic yet engagé, interested in influencing the young and shaping the political culture, yet eschewing office (Laski could easily have become a Labour MP) or organizational commitment (Lerner has shied away from positions in A.D.A.).

Both as Jews were aware of their distance from the established idols of society. Both have been highly self-conscious of their varied aspirations and roles (Laski more so, so we can see from his posturings in his letters to Holmes). Both felt that they were summing up a generation. Both books were a decade in the writings and were published a decade apart. And it is that decade which marks the difference.

LASKI was trying to write a Marxist analysis of America. For all his awareness of the complexities of the American past, his picture of the contemporary scene was cast in a rigid bedframe. America was a political democracy, but only of the middle class "which assumes though it does not announce, the authority of wealth," and is careful not to "jeopardize the claims that the men of property invariably put forward as the boundaries beyond which democracy may not pass." Nor could the political democracy "conceal the facts that [its forms] were based on an economic foundation which was growing oligarchical in character," while the courts served to "act as a brake on the democratic habits of the legislature." His conclusion was dark. "The spirit of America in the nineteen forties . . . [with] a growth of anti-semitism and of bitter hostility to the Negro advance" must give any "honest observer . . . some hesitation about its outcome."

This was Laski in 1947, after 14 years of the New Deal and Fair Deal. He could hold these views, knowing as much as he did about the details of life in the United States, because of the conviction, shaped by a Marxist view of social evolution, "that the history of the United States, would, *despite everything*, follow the general pattern of capitalist democracy in Europe." How reckless the unqualified phrase, "despite everything," yet this conviction was held in unwavering form by most of the left-wing intelligentsia in the thirties and forties and is one of the reasons why the "left" so consistently misinterpreted American political developments.

In reading Lerner, one is struck immediately by the difference in key terms: the language is no longer Marx, but cultural anthropology *cum* Jungian and a nervous sociological idiom. Where for Laski the US comes into perspective only through *socio-economic forces, vested interests* and *power*, in Lerner there is *myth, norms, character, culture* and *personality*. Where Laski felt that we would recapitulate the fate of Europe, for Lerner there was the "psychic necessity for rejecting Europe" arising out of (with reference to *The Golden Bough*) "the symbolic slaying of the father." Frustration for Laski was a socio-political problem because "the ruling class of the United States employed the traditional American spirit to prevent the adaptation of American life to the facts it encountered," (*i.e.* the need for a socialist solution to economic difficulties). For Lerner, frustration is a socio-psychological drama, induced by success, the conflicts in values and the inability of individuals rising in status to learn new styles of life.

THE CONTRASTS are most extreme in their key image of Americanism. There is a malaise in America, said Laski, which was responsible for the "European escapism" of Henry James, the "religious escapism" of Willa Cather, the "provocative defiance" of Tate and Ransom (*i.e.* the Southern agrarians), and that malaise arises out of *Americanism*, a chauvinistic doctrine fostered by the industrial oligarchy to hide if not corrupt "the failure [in America] of the historic drive towards the egalitarian society." The American, says Lerner in a rapturous paragraph, is the modern man *par excellence*, restless, mobile, a man of energy, mastery and power:

> Above all he is the man for whom the walls have broken down. He is the double figure in Marlowe, of Tamerlane and Dr. Faustus, the one sweeping like a footloose barbarian across the plains to overleap the barriers of early civilization, the other breaking the taboos against knowledge and experience, even at the cost of his soul. . . . Thus the great themes of the Renaissance and Reformation are fulfilled in the American as the archetypical modern man—the discovery of new areas,

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the charting of skies, the lure of power, the realization of self in works, the magic of science, the consciousness of the individual, the sense of the unity of history.

These themes, says Lerner, following Wyndham Lewis, plus the "logic" of its geography and history, will make America "the epitome of all societies."

Clearly the picture sketched by Laski is out of focus today. Business is less pecuniary and acquisitive, although more manipulative and security-conscious; it has achieved a certain social-mindedness and become decent, at least to its "exempt" personnel (a curious legal term signifying those who are exempt from unions under the Taft-Hartley law, or to whom the overtime provisions of the Walsh-Healey act do not apply). The social strains of the last ten years have not been over property but over status: McCarthy was backed not by corporate big business but by a curious mixture of the new rich and various ethnic groups whose unity lay in a hate of intellectualism. The traditional conservatives proved to be the strongest bulwark against McCarthy while the courts have upheld the constitutional spirit against the "democratic" legislatures.

WHETHER the US, however, will "epitomize" all other societies is a moot point. What is startling is that in the next half century, for the first time in human history, a common technological foundation will underlie all cultures. Yet this does not mean that all societies will be alike. Despite certain "logics" which follow from the fact of industrialization (technical education, new professional classes, the increase in white-collar occupations) each society is sufficiently singular in its cultural traditions for the profiles of these countries to remain markedly different. And it is this cultural "superstructure," in fact, which belied Laski's gloomy predictions.

The remarkable fact about the United States—and the one which makes it difficult for anyone to do justice to it—is that ours is probably the first-large scale society to have "built" change and innovation into the culture. It is this, perhaps, which has allowed us to absorb the fantastic number of social upheavals which followed the break-up of family capitalism and the rise of the corporation, the abandonment of old frugalities and the spread of prodigal consumption, the centralizing of political decision-making and the assumptions of world power responsibility, while older societies, such as Germany, were overwhelmed by status and political anxieties which came in the wake of change. It is significant, perhaps, that the major theorists of mass society were German—Karl Mannheim, Emil Lederer and Hannah Arendt—and derived their analysis from the breakdown of traditional political structures in Germany under mass democratization. Yet here, despite the erosion of family and community ties, we have not experienced the European *sturms und drangs*.

Any attempt, then, to encompass the variety which is America, must not only describe such changes, but find some scheme or method which will give some coherence to this fluidity and change.

This is the first section of a two-part essay, to be completed next week.

Letters to the Establishment

by Richard Chase

ONE would hardly imagine, from reading these letters, that the author had written *The Romantic Comedians* and *The Sheltered Life*. For the Ellen Glasgow of these fine novels of manners is surpassed among American women writers only by Edith Wharton.

Mr. Rouse's book contains but a limited selection of the letters, and it is possible that some time in the future when the whole batch is available, Miss Glasgow may seem a more interesting correspondent than she does now. Mr. Rouse's editorial principles and expediencies are not entirely clear. He says, "the selection has been made with regard for biographical, literary, and philosophical relevance." But this might be true of almost any collection of letters by a literary figure, and he does not make himself more explicit, except to say that it would be neither "advisable" nor "practicable" to publish all the letters now.

Letters of Ellen Glasgow, edited by Blair Rouse (Harcourt, Brace; $6.75).

Most readers of Ellen Glasgow will be eager for information about the spiritual and moral crises she went through (as nearly as one can make out) during the periods of 1898-1905 and 1914-1923. One wants to know more about her attempted escape to New York from the confining life of Richmond, which made the subject matter of *The Wheel of Life* (1906). This interesting novel always embarrassed the author, and she and her friends consistently underestimated it. One wants to know more about Miss Glasgow's love affairs with the two men dimly described as "Gerald" and "Harold" in her memoir *The Woman Within*. Both of these attachments seem to have been unhappy — the first her memoir treats cryptically as a tragic passion for a married man who died young and the second as a "comedy of errors," a middle-age romance which she came to despise and resent.

Both these affairs must have confirmed in her that ill-concealed contempt for men which one finds in her novels, and which she and her correspondents of both sexes take to be a sign of superior humanity and moral fortitude. She perhaps developed this feeling about men, with its accompanying narcissism, from her relation with her father, a Calvinist business man of the old school whom Miss Glasgow and her friends regard with its accompanying narcissism, from beliefs were "cruel," although they are not shown to be so in practice. One would like more understanding of the origins of Miss Glasgow's too obtrusive self-pity (she speaks, in her strong, tearless way, of "the long tragedy of my life" and of her desire to escape the steady persecution of "vulgarity and obscene cruelty" which she imagines that the world directs at her). One would like to know too why she believed that "cruelty . . . is the one and only sin," rather than believing that the worst sins are to be found among the various forms of fraud.

But the reader interested in these matters will find next to nothing in Mr. Rouse's book that sheds new light upon them. The whole early and early-middle period of Miss Glasgow's life is but skimpily represented, so that by the time

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we have got to page 89 of a 372 page book, it is already 1928, the author is 54 years old and has already written *Barren Ground, The Romantic Comedians, They Stooped to Folly*, and *The Sheltered Life.*

By 1928 she has long been a success and is approaching the time when she can think of demanding of her publisher for a novel "an advance of twenty thousand on a straight twenty percent royalty, and a guarantee of fifteen thousand to be spent on advertising the next novel." She can also wangle reviews of her books, and instruct the reviewers what to say, in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the *Herald-Tribune Book Review*, the *Times Book Review*, and *The New Republic.* I would not myself pretend to be above a bit of literary politicking. Still, it seems to me a strange moral universe in which Miss Glasgow's love letters (if any) are suppressed and her review-wangling letters unblushingly printed as if they were contributions to culture and enlightenment.

Since there is so little of the private life and impressions of Miss Glasgow in this book and so much airing of opinion, the reader can hardly help thinking of the book as a sustained defense of a point of view. The values she defends are those which were implanted or confirmed in her by her long correspondence with such literary figures as Van Wyck Brooks, Henry Seidel Canby, J. Donald Adams, and Irita Van Doren. Miss Glasgow was made a heroine by the middlebrow literary establishment. And the fact that her review-wangling letters are included here and the fact that Mr. Rouse assumes the reader must be interested in her rather conventional opinions, shows how unassailable he believes this literary establishment to be.

Most of Miss Glasgow's correspondents in later life brought out the worst in her, as one cannot help reflecting after reading the few early letters to Walter Hines Page, when she was still a young writer, rather naïve and fluttery, but buoyant, flexible, intense, and happily free of her later moralism. In the early 1930's she corresponded with Allen Tate, who tried to interest her in southern agrarianism. But she had decided against all forms of radicalism, and she wound up by contributing an essay not to *I'll Take My Stand* but to *I Believe*, edited by Clifton Fadiman. In this (whatever we may think of agrarianism) we have a small parable which helps to explain the gradual impoverishment of Ellen Glasgow's mind and art.

In her late years the tone of the letters becomes top-lofty, as when she says, referring to Faulkner, "the peasant mind . . . no longer excites me" or when she shares with a correspondent the idea that "of course we are still in the childish state of culture" or speaks of "the present fashion of irresponsibility in letters," vaguely referring to practically everything written in the 1940's that was any good. Her language often becomes indistinguishable from book review cliché. She came to live in that world where good literature is said to be *wise, heart-warming, fortifying, penetrating,* and above all — oh, far above all—civilized. She will get off a stuffy sentence about a book of essays by Henry Hazlitt like "There is, indeed, no book in recent American criticism that seems to me so distinguished."

As a member of the official literary corporation, Miss Glasgow came to defend her opinions as belonging to the great healthy mainstream of thought and as avoiding both the prtensions of the "intellectuals" and the vulgarity of the mob. Thus she takes Van Wyck Brooks' essay called "Primary Literature and as avoiding both the pretensions of major utterances of modern times, every bit as penetrating and civilized, it would seem, as J. Donald Adams' great essay "Literature and Individualism." Yet her opinions were not "primary" or of the mainstream. They merely served to isolate her from everything great and vital in the modern literary world. The list of important writers she knew nothing about would be very long. Those whom she speaks of slightingly, though in one or two cases with grudging praise, include D. H. Lawrence, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Faulkner, Hemingway, Henry James, Henry Adams, and Edith Wharton.

Taken by themselves Ellen Glasgow's opinions (as expressed in this book) are of little interest compared with her novels, for it is those one should come back to, after shaking these letters out of one's head. One continues to honor her too for her long devotion to her craft and to sympathize with what one knows of her personal sufferings, among them the increasing deafness about which she was so sensitive. But *Letters of Ellen Glasgow* has been edited and presented to the public (whether by design or instinct) as a book defending a *parti pris.* It is another item in what Dwight Macdonald recently called the Middlebrow Counter-revolution. And it must be dealt with as such.

On Reading Ortega

by Claudio Guillen

The American publication of Ortega y Gasset's books is a laudable enterprise, and the translation of two more of his books (closely following the reprints of *The Revolt of the Masses* and *The Dehumanization of Art*) may help to bring about the kind of circumstances which would be most favorable to a proper appreciation of one of the most rewarding minds of our century.

By such circumstances I mean comprehension beyond petty misunderstandings and familiarity this side of idolatry. In saying this I recall Ortega's own insistence on the fact that realities can only be understood from a correct distance and with a serene temper, on the one hand, while, on the other, the pursuit of truth ought to spring from a robust enthusiasm for life, a healthy proximity to experience and a distrust of abstractions. It is therefore imperative that

On Love: Aspects of a Single Theme, by José Ortega y Gasset, translated by Tony Talbot (Meridian; $3.50). *Man and People*, by José Ortega y Gasset, translated by Willard R. Trask (Norton; $4.50). *Ortega y Gasset: An Outline of His Philosophy*, by José Ferrater Mora (Yale; $2.50).

Ortega's works should be approached without disdain for their vital context, without prejudice against the idiosyncracies which are the price of their spon-

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taneity, and yet that they should be seriously considered in terms of the hard core of philosophical reflection through which they achieve unity and stature.

This is a delicate task. Seldom has a philosopher been so ambitious and so personal, so broad in his range of interests and so closely attached to the disposition and the vicissitudes of his age. Thus it is difficult for most Spaniards to avoid either hero-worship or an attitude of patronizing and affectionate disrespect. An almost father-son relationship has existed between Ortega and the later generations of Spanish intellectuals, as was proved by the uprisings which his death in 1955 set off among students in Madrid. But the indifference with which his works have been received in France (Camus, a Hispanophile, is the exception) exemplifies the misunderstandings which arise from an instinctive dislike of the manner and peculiarities of his writing.

As we read his essays on love, for example, we are confronted with both a group of connected, autonomous *thoughts* and a conspicuous *style of thought*. This dual nature is, to be sure, characteristic of all rational speculation. Every sound thought has two aspects: it defines a reality in its intemporal significance and expresses, besides, a subjectivity that is situated in time and space. What is distinctive of Ortega, however, is that the connection between the two should be so explicit and effectual.

As early as 1914 Ortega emphasized the "circumstantial" character of human existence. One cannot conceive of the self as a radically independent being or as separable from the circumstances in which he is placed, just as these circumstances acquire a meaning through their participation in an individual life. A man, in order to know himself, is compelled to look intelligently at his surroundings, to be an alert observer or "spectator" (to recall one of Ortega's titles). Life cannot be seized in the abstract, nor is the act of seizing it abstract. Man, to be precise, as Ortega later explained (for instance, in *Man and People*) does not have a nature—either generic or individual—nor is he a "thing" or a "being." The traditional quarrel between idealists and realists can be ended by comprehending that the primary reality with which philosophy ought to deal is simply the individual human life—a process resulting from a dialogue between man and his circumstances. Does this imply a "philosophy of life" in the manner of such humanists as Wilhelm Dilthey or Georg Simmel? Ortega does not share the irrationalism of these thinkers. The refusal of another dichotomy, instead, is called for: between the extremes of "vitalism" and rationalism. In *The Modern Theme* (1924) he recommends a form of reason which is not geometrical or abstract, but "vital"—adapted to the impressions which life collects as it is being lived, to the kind of conceptualization which is actually a fact and a necessity of existence.

This method, ever operative in Ortega, whether explicitly or not, is obviously relevant to the main ideas which are developed in the essays *On Love*. But it also affects their organization and style; or what I have called the author's idiosyncracies.

Ortega likes to think and write on various levels, as the variety in scope and tone of the essays *On Love* clearly shows. The first piece ("Features of Love") and the last one, for example, are nearest to theory, to the end-result of reflection originally applied to the fresh data of experience. There we witness the final stage of a process of conceptualization, of the passage, in Ferrater Mora's terms, from "impressions" to "concepts." But as we read the "Thoughts on Standing before the Marquesa de Santillana's Portrait" or the "Landscape with a Deer in the Background," we become immersed in the flow of "vital reason" at work, and can fairly touch the circumstances of the thinking. Thus the movement from the outer circles of meditation to their inner core reveals the intimate connection between Ortega's philosophical position and his style of thought.

On the periphery we find some of Ortega's less endearing mannerisms. The gesture of disdain, above all, or of arrogance. Or irksome generalizations. And there is also his obsession with folly, the constant flagellation of stupidity.

Let us not mistake Ortega's brashness, however, for a lack of understanding of opinions other than his own. His pose is rational rather than personal, impatient rather than ill-tempered. "The height of disdain"—he writes—"consists of not condescending to discover a fellow being's defects but, from our inaccessible height, projecting upon him the favorable light of our own well-being."

The tension under which Ortega wrote originated, not from a haughty well-being—as far as ideas were concerned—but from at least two other causes. First, Ortega placed a high premium upon intelligence. Although man is compelled by his life to reason, he is not basically rational, and only through a kind of ascent along a hierarchy of states of being does he reach a fullness of clear intelligence, which is the fullness of life itself (as Ferrater Mora points out).

Second, Ortega appeared at the height of Spain's period of cultural reform and rejuvenation. Thrust into the limelight from his youth, and with no worthy rival at hand other than Unamuno (who did not argue with living philosophers), he fought to destroy routine habits of thinking, to keep his country "abreast of the times," to electrify the intellectual atmosphere around him. He fought, not only to demonstrate, but to stimulate intelligence (to which end the "style of thought," again, was fundamental). One can only suspect that it is difficult to do both things at once. And that Ortega's writings might have been more conducive to intelligent argument if they had not been so blindingly brilliant.

The vitality of Ortega's style (which his translator, Mr. Talbot, renders with great tact) reflects both the happiness of the mind in its moments of conscious plentitude and a basically optimistic philosophical temper. The latter is made clear by his rejection of Stendhal's conception of love. The theory of crystallization not only contradicts the lessons of experience, in Ortega's view, but represents one of the triumphs of his *bete noire*—the pessimistic idealism of 19th-Century philosophers (since to Stendhal the reasons for love are in the lover's mind). "I cannot accept"—he asserts in *On Love*—"without a great many convincing arguments any theory by which human life, in one of its most profound and serious activities—such as love—turns out to be a sheer and almost

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consistent absurdity, oddity, and mistake." This is the first obstacle which must be cleared if the phenomenon of love is to be grasped correctly.

The second obstacle also involves a traditional and fallacious dichotomy—between mind and matter, body and soul. It concerns the role of sexuality, which is often exaggerated — since it does not coincide with love—and also simplified—for in this context it should not be confused with the elemental sexual instinct. True physical attraction is neither frequent nor trivial; in most cases it "is supported and complicated by germs of sentimental ardor, of admiration for physical beauty, sympathy, etc."

The author's evident delight in his subject makes these essays on love particularly characteristic and illuminating. Because they provide us with an excellent introduction to a superior writer's style of thought, I have based these remarks on them. But *Man and People* introduces the reader more thoroughly to the thought itself. Written in the form of a single essay, and with a greater uniformity of approach, it covers many of the fundamental tenets of Ortega's conception of the world. "El hombre y la gente" was published posthumously in Spain, and it is apparent that in it the author meant to offer a final recapitulation of his philosophy. A theory of society is developed in *Man and People* (which we read in another admirable translation by Willard Trask) only after those basic tenets have been summarized at length and with exceptional clarity.

THE EXISTENCE of such a basic core or system of thought has been denied by some of Ortega's more thoughtless critics. I have relied quite heavily here on Mr. Ferrater Mora's book precisely because it clears away so effectively much that is secondary and highlights the underlying unity of its subject. Since Ferrater Mora's method of presentation is biographical or "narrative," the coherence of view which emerges from his study is all the more convincing. Obviously the author—himself a Spanish philosopher, and originally an *émigré*, but not a direct disciple of Ortega's—maintains that correct distance which is necessary to an equitable treatment of this philosophy. American readers are fortunate in having such a guide.

The Essence of Cape Cod

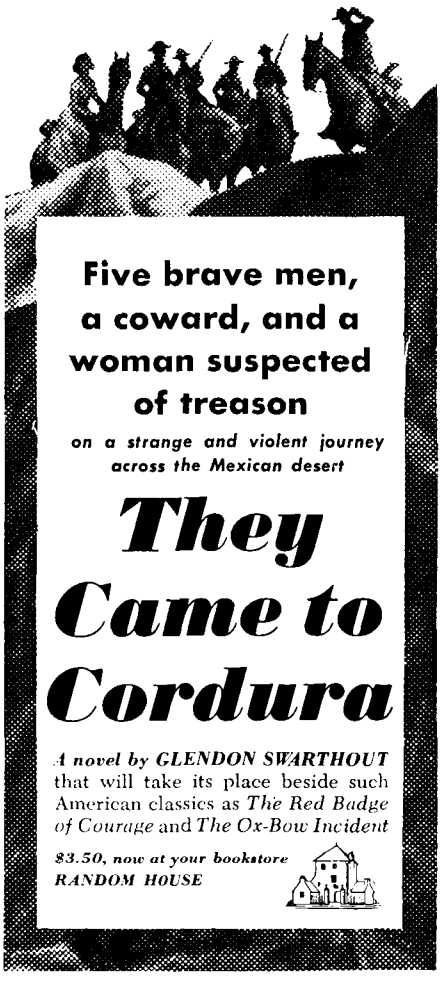
by Frank Getlein

THE THING about Karl Knaths is Cape Cod. It may work the other way around, too. Since he arrived there—it's almost 40 years now—great changes have come over Knaths' Provincetown, way out on the end. A fishing community for generations, Provincetown had attracted artists and writers before Knaths. His first studio had been occupied by Eugene O'Neill and by Charles Demuth. Since then painters, writers, actors, directors and producers have come in droves, lured, perhaps, by a superstitious belief in the efficacy of place. They've been followed by vacationers in great numbers who, with the pathetic talent of bringing along the very thing they're trying to get away from, have turned every other house into an inn and the ones in between into olde gifte shoppes. On top of all this—the phrase is used literally—Boston, in its less than Athenian suburban aspect, is inching its way out the Cape, subdivision by subdivision. There is something Sophoclean in this parricidal return of the Cape Cod house to the Cape.

Karl Knaths, by Paul Mocsanyi with an introduction by Duncan Phillips and an appreciation by Emanuel Benson. Commentary by Knaths (Phillips Gallery; $5).

Going out to look at the Cape, then, is easily frustrated by the presence of all the other people who have gone out for the same reason and have got there first. As an old Cape Codder, Karl Knaths has never recognized the changes in the place and, in some ways, it is easier to get at the essence of Cape Cod in his painting than in the place itself. Knaths, of course, is no scene painter nor does he commemorate the dear dead days before the deluge. Rather he is concerned with the unchanging truth of this rare spit of land thrust 40 miles into the Atlantic. Knaths' truth of Cape Cod is first of all a visual truth and it has little to do with the look of things out there as it might be described in a color photograph. It is related very closely to the staggering economy with which nature gets such spectacular effects out on the Cape. It is related to the intensity of light, the clarity of form, and the shifting fog, diffusing both. It is related to that sea edge emergence of life no less a part of the New England coast than of any coast, but there veiled by the austerities of geography. It is related, finally, to that union of the momentary and the eternal which, to be sure, exists philosophically any place on the globe but which is visually unavoidable in the dunes and waves of Knaths' Cape Cod.

It is good that a book on Karl Knaths has been published with over 50 photographs and eight color plates. It is wonderfully appropriate that the publisher is the Phillips Gallery, Washington. Duncan Phillips and his gallery have been a unique and important force in art in America for decades. The Gallery itself, which has completely taken over the former Phillips home, is one of the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pleasantest and perhaps the only comfortable place to look at art in the country. Through the years Mr. and Mrs. Phillips have resisted the increasing institutionalization of modern art and instead put the uniformed guard and concrete and glass money into painting and sculpture. In many museums the director maintains a precarious balance between the trustees and the curatorial apparatus. Phillips has bypassed that problem by, in effect, combining all those functions in himself. The result is, of course, most fruitful. One of the Gallery's great advantages over other public museums has been the ability to buy heavily the works of individual artists without regard to the kind of balanced diet that shapes many institutional purchase policies.

In 1922 Phillips bought the first painting Knaths sold and for some years was the only collector of his work. The photographs in the book are an extension of the Phillips "unit" system, whereby a given artist's development is made available. The direction in Knaths, like that of his era, has been toward abstraction. He has always stopped well this side of that line beyond which the recognizable image vanishes completely leaving only color and shape on canvas.

Oddly enough, Knaths is one of the most systematic painters in the business. Perhaps the most valuable passage in Mocsanyi's commentary is a close account of Knaths painting a picture. Knaths chooses his closely related colors and lays out the basic spatial proportions almost like Cyrano choosing rhymes and refrain for a ballade. There is no suggestion but what this habitual science plays a large part in the effect of the paintings. Their infinitely subtle variations on a color, the precision of black line playing across the surface, the control of space which, as often as not, relates the arm or the trunk of the fisherman figure more to a patch of sky or a stretch of sand than to the body itself, such things can no doubt be readily explained in terms of Knaths' system of composition. But these mathematical devices, while revealing once more the musical efficacy of the higher numbers, are themselves directed to the revelation and praise of a peculiar meeting of land and sea, of a wind-washed or fog-filtered light and of a way of life shaped in part by those things.

The best writing in the book is provided by Knaths himself. More and more museums, these days, are getting artists to write statements on why they paint as they do, what they believe in, and whither painting. Most of this comes out like a Hearst series of guest editorials by moguls on why America is a sound investment. Knaths has written one of the very few statements of artistic faith that mean something. It is illuminated, throughout by bits of personal history and some beautiful short passages of nature seen and loved.

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MOVIES

Truth and Fiction

WHILE the sentimental novel and its trashy screen equivalent have never actually been admired by persons this side of the third grade, there are people who profess to find in such things a rich source of humor. I have noticed, though, that most of those who go to a sob opus meaning to laugh remain to yawn, if they remain at all. The nice thing about *A Novel Affair*, a new British satire, is that it squarely faces up to the fact that the amount of real fun to be got out of cheap fiction could be comfortably accommodated on the head of a pin, and that in order to be funny at its expense, you mustn't expect it to do the work for you. The film, consequently, doesn't overwork the object of its derision, but depends for its comic effect on a beautiful contrivance of its own. The device is that of the technicolor film within the black-and-white film, the former depicting a wildly improbable and appalling novel, the latter showing the prosaic happenings on which the novel was based.

A Novel Affair (written and directed by Sidney and Muriel Box).

The author of the novel is a crisp and cheerful lady (Margaret Leighton) who lives in the country with a husband who is confined to a wheel-chair (Ralph Richardson). The lady, when we meet her, appears to be having some difficulty scouting up material for a long overdue novel. The fortuitous arrival of Carlo (Carlo Justini), a handsome young Italian hired to act as chauffeur to the incapacitated Mr. Richardson, provides the novelist with her *donnée*. In practically no time, she grinds out a perfectly horrible specimen of the romantic novel, in which a lady pianist, her invalid husband, and a virile Italian chauffeur named Mario arrange themselves in the customary flaccid triangle. We pursue this work in its entirety, in a technicolor dramatization.

Miss Leighton, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Justini perform their roles in this piece with evident relish—as if they almost mean it. Miss Leighton's characterization of the Heroine is a fine study in meaningless mannerisms, with emphasis on heavy breathing and more heavy breathing, while Mr. Richardson, dons a beard for the occasion and affects a draggy, caustic manner; the character emerges as a kind of cross between Clifford Chatterly and Commander Whitehead. Mr. Justini, as Mario, is everything a passionate stranger should be. He wears a spiffy baby-blue uniform, in contrast to the quite nondescript one he wore as Carlo. The novel presently ends, with the husband murdered and the lovers "inextricably bound" by common guilt.

The black and white story is then resumed. Carlo has happened on the manuscript, and read it, but with a far

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from critical eye. He takes as entirely possible everything the novelist, in her zeal for the improbable, has put into her opus. To her growing astonishment, and our increasing delight, he fancies himself the chauffeur in the novel, and proceeds to act out the part. His attempt to make life conform to fiction soon brings him in for a number of surprises.

In the novel, for instance, the illicit romance got underway through an automobile breakdown, which made it necessary for the principals to spend the night at the nearby inn, where only two rooms—with an adjoining balcony—were available. The spectacle of a group of happy villagers revelling under the garish light of a moon three times its regular size, also helped matters a great deal, not to speak of ubiquitous honeysuckle vines and a pink sky.

So Carlo, eager to make the shift from the vicarious to the actual with the greatest dispatch, slyly introduces a cupful of sugar into the gas tank of the car bearing him and the novelist homeward from London. The motor, as expected, expires en route. But nothing else happens as expected. Moments after the breakdown, a car comes along, as cars have a way of doing on public thoroughfares, and whisks the lady off to have a drink with its driver, while poor Carlo is left by the roadside to sullenly wait for the towing-crew. His spirits revive at the news that the night will have to be spent at the local inn, but further disappointment awaits him. Instead of the anticipated adjoining rooms, there is only one room to be had, which the lady takes, as ladies will; Carlo sleeps in the garage. His last hope, the village dance, leads him, alone, to a rock and roll festival. I noticed no moon.

In a subsequent scene, still at it, Carlo begs the novelist to leave her husband and go away with him. "You are so beautiful. You should give children to the world," he declares, quoting from the novel. But here again, life proves a shade paler than fiction. The lady already *has* given children to the world, two boys who are away at school. What is more, her husband's disablement, of two years duration, is well on its way to being cured.

The film, we can see, works over its subject pretty thoroughly. It gets at the chief difficulty with the cheap romance, which is its disinclination to say anything remotely resembling the truth; and also shows the wicked effect it can have on persons who, for various reasons, aren't too fussy about distinctions between what is true and what isn't. This variety of folly—Bovaryism—is perhaps no longer much of a problem. Current fiction seems, if anything, to be inviting excesses in the opposite direction, with its over-insistence on the bleak and the gritty as the only "real" aspects of life, as if reality hadn't other facets, including some that are pleasant. This, however, is another matter, perhaps for a subsequent satire to take up. But it will take some doing to match the achievement of *A Novel Affair*, or that of the three characters who played the six principal roles.

JANET WINN

Correspondence

(Continued from page 3)

talgia for the Eight and a complaint that "a hyphenated American art" passed them by. The "hyphenated" art that passed them by was only the main stream of Western painting, which had actually passed beyond them more than 50 years before the Armory show—with Courbet.

As the article proceeds it turns out that Middle-Western isolationist art-criticism, like the Middle-Western isolationist politics of 1940, is actually not isolationist at all, but pro-German.

There were, of course, some magnificent paintings in the German show, especially those of Kandinsky and Beckmann, whom Mr. Getlein doesn't bother to mention, but painters like Dix, whom he admires, are mere illustrators who, instead of contributing to the language of painting, have expressed themselves in an outmoded language. By *outmoded* I mean already outmoded when they used it.

Mr. Getlein cannot seem to forgive the abstract expressionists for painting pictures which say something so complex and profound that it cannot be reduced to the pat little messages that Mr. Getlein requires to describe a picture. He forbids the artist to explore the unexplored, since the hitherto unexplored is indescribable by Mr. Getlein. But as long as a painter paints a message that Mr. Getlein can understand and pigeonhole, the art with which he conveys it

Notes on Contributors

DANIEL BELL, the labor editor of *Fortune*, has written and lectured extensively on American civilization. RICHARD CHASE's most recent critical book is *Walt Whitman Reconsidered*. CLAUDIO GUILLEN is on the faculty of Princeton University.

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► ***Allowing the Teachers to Teach***

EACH TIME I read such an article as David Stevenson's "Who Will Teach the Teachers," (*NR*, Jan. 13) I feel even stronger an urge to write my article, "Who Will ALLOW the Teachers to Teach." Miraculous though it is, there are still a few good teachers in the secondary school systems. But in my teaching experience, it seemed to me that everything possible was done to discourage or interfere with their teaching.

Teaching can be and often is a 12 hour a day job. It is not unusual for a teacher to teach every period of the school day and to have five different classes to prepare material for each day. Usually she has no free time at school so the preparation must be done at home, along with the grading of papers and making out of grades for a minimum of 150 students. She must return to school in the evenings to sponsor clubs, present school plays, publish year books, chaperone events, sell tickets to athletic games, attend PTA meetings or school open houses.

Moreover, in the school in which I taught, there seemed to be an endless number of reports concerning everything from the number of students going to the basketball tourney to red ants in the lockers. If a teacher made a mistake in her daily absentee report, the next morning she found in her mailbox, a note informing her of the error and requesting her to turn the form over and make a full explanation, yes, a full explanation, of the reason she made the error. There were constant reports to be made out concerning the physical conditions of the room—endless reminders to keep the chairs so many inches from the walls and window shades at a certain level. A teacher might see a dean or principal roaming about her classroom. How fortunate, she would think to herself, that she had the class divided into group activities. (This had been suggested at the last departmental meeting as an attempt to care for the wide range of students' abilities.) The next day she might receive a note which read: "I noted yesterday that you had your class in group activity. In the group seated in the rear of the room, one of the boys had his head against the wall which probably left a grease spot. We have a fine new addition to our school . . . etc. . . . etc. . . . etc. Will you please check and report if there are any smudges. . . . "

. . . Have you heard of the sacred ritual of the normal curve? If you are a normal teacher and your class is an average class, your grades should be distributed as follows: 10 percent A's and F's, 15 percent B's and D's and 50 percent C's. At the end of each grading period, each teacher had to plot on a graph her grades. Quote, "Please don't feel that your grades have to make a perfect curve; however if they don't, kindly turn this form over and make a full explanation." Unquote. I was called into conference about failing too many.

The most serious indictment I have to make against the school systems in which I taught was the direct and indirect pressure exerted on the teacher to conform to all existing procedures and patterns of the school. Meetings were held to "discuss" plans and policies already formed. Any teacher who dared to suggest or criticize was labeled a trouble maker and generally called into a conference. . . . There was close supervision of all she did in the classroom; visits were made by heads of departments and deans which led to more reports and more conferences. Almost every school has a two way communications radio in each room. No one is supposed to listen to the classroom procedure without the teacher's knowledge. She usually had the knowledge afterwards.

BETTY TODD BUTLER

Bloomington, Indiana

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